Please return to
Mrs. F. E. H. Haines -

Uintah Mission -

Extracts from letter of Miss C. C. Ayer. White Rocks. Utah

"Our cook could run a sewing machine, and assisted very materially in getting the beds in readiness.

The Indian children never put on anything they wore home from their homes, after the bath. Our oldest girl was twelve, the next oldest ten, and the rest all younger. As I could not tell them anything scarcely but must talk by signs, their baths required my personal attention all the time they were here. Besides all their garments that must be made, the washing and mending had to receive attention each week, and I was as economical as possible, in regard to help. Having a man in the kitchen but little aid could be obtained from that source, although our school was not large, I spent much time with the girls each day, and the evening was usually occupied in giving the boys and girls some attention. As they could not read, nor listen to reading understandingly, pictures were shown them, and various plays introduced, but it was tiresome as some were so young and ignorant. We were disappointed about the time they required for sleep, as it was so very little. If we sent them off early, they would talk, sing &c. And if silence was required our ears were greeted in the early morning with their chatter. Saturdays and Sundays were usually my most tiresome days; as you can see that my hand and attention were fully occupied.

We closed the last of May with nineteen pupils and all expressed their intention to return when school re-opened. As our pupils were exceedingly fond of dancing, never ceasing to tire of this amusement, we allowed it in the school room. The boys very much prefered dancing in their "Nyck yuk" costumes, which they often completed by adding chalk, lime, ink, soot or paint to their faces. The costume and the paint I did not care to allow, but did as occasionally as a special favor. Although I feared this would make me trouble, had no idea of the risk I was running until too late; and as after their final departure an abundance of soft soap, white-wash, concentrated lye, and boiling water was used. Even our new comforters were ripped up, and the covers washed, and at last I had the satisfaction of feeling that everything was thoroughly disinfected, and there was not a "greyback" on the premises. I hope and trust this experience will not be renewed -

Most of the pupils are boys, and overall are large. They need direction in the dormitory and bath room, as well as in the wood yard and garden, and do not appreciate their advantages, and seldom do work voluntarily.

I hope soon to be able to give you some idea of the help we shall need.

The girls take great delight in bringing me flowers or anything they think will please me.

The Indians are observing and capable of imitating much that they see done, and we feel that their education in domestic matters was worth considerable to them during the last part of the time they were with us. Our cook during the last month had both boys and girls assist in the dining room, and kitchen, and even the youngest was able at the last to do what was required quite acceptably.

The condition of the women and girls is indeed deplorable and discouraging to one who has the interests of the race at heart. When I was here three years ago, I

had ten different girls in school, and I do not suppose there was one over fourteen, and the most were considerably younger. Of these only two were with us last year, all the rest were "having a man" as they say. One of them has an old man who has had other women. Polygamy is practiced quite extensively and one of our Indians - "Bull of the Mods", who has had a woman a few years, took also a girl of twelve years or younger. She does not look to be over ten. She came from the Snake country, and has no parents here. A young Indian - a former pupil of mine - who is related to Bull of the Mods desired her also, and she gave away with him but was obliged to give the younger one up. The youngest are very much like slaves. The saddest case which has come under my immediate observation is that of a girl who was with us last year and is only nine years of age. I gave her the name of Sarah. She was delicate in manners and features, unusually quiet, modest and timid and therefor attractive, especially as she was so very willing to do what I asked, and did it all very neatly. No matter what she was sewing, when done I was pleased with the execution, and so with all she did. Her father and mother are not popular with any of us, and more particularly are we now disgusted with them as they have encouraged her living with an Indian. Her father kept asking us in the Winter, how long she was to stay, telling us an Indian desired her, and then took her home to stay. Mr C. insisted on his returning her, but as soon as school closed we learned that her fate was sealed; and last week, when I asked her father if she could come back at the opening of school he replied in the negative. I feel that this is the most discouraging feature in the work. When the women come in, they almost invariably sit on the floor, and will eat almost anything; while the men are more dignified and particular. To elevate the women and cause them to have more self respect, would give the men more respect for them. While there is much to stimulate us to labor on patiently and trustfully, there are numerous obstacles that seem almost insurmountable. Thus far we have not sufficiently educated them to enable us to instruct them about their future welfare. We cannot give them an intelligent idea of a Savior. Often I fear that I have not made as strenuous efforts to accomplish this as others would have done. I fear the Lord cannot bless what has been done, as He would, had I been more faithful or earnest. I have desired it so it but have not known how.

We regret exceedingly the Mormon influence that is brought to bear upon our Indians. Several of them have two or three wives and one has four. Of course it is to the interest of the Mormons to flatter and pet them, take them into the Church &c - at least they think so, and do it and consequently we do not compare very favorably with the Mormons when we talk against polygamy & do not invite them to eat with us, at our tables &c &c.

Winnebah Mission

By Extracts from Letter from
Miss E. C. Ager. Philo Rocky
Utah.